R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 012 197 RC 000 937

DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM.

BY- HARTENBERGER, WALTER L.

PUB DATE DEC 65

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.32 8P.

DESCRIPTORS- *SMALL SCHOOLS, RURAL SCHOOLS, SECONDARY EDUCATION, *INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION, COMMUNITY, TEACHERS, CLASSROOMS, PHYSICAL PLANT, *INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION, EDUCATIONAL FINANCE, MOCCASIN, MONTANA

INDIVIDUALIZATION OF INSTRUCTION IS A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE OF A SMALL, RURAL HIGH SCHOOL. FIVE FACTORS OPERANT IN INDIVIDUALIZATION ARE THE DIRECT GOAL-CENTERED INFLUENCES OF THE COMMUNITY, TEACHER PREPARATION, THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT, USE OF THE PHYSICAL PLANT, AND OPTIMAL USE OF SCHOOL FUNDS. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATIONS IN MOCCASIN, MONTANA, SCHOOLS ARE CITED. THIS ARTICLE IS A REPRINT FROM "THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RECORD," VOLUME 51, NUMBER 3, DECEMBER 1965. (JM)

[Vol. 51, No. 3, DECEMBER 1965]

ED012197

Developing an Individualized Instructional Program

Walter L. Hartenberger

Many small rural high schools appear to be uncertain of the role they play in providing an educational program of high quality that is designed to fit the needs of rural youth growing up in a modern technological society. One contemporary educational trend is the concern for individual differences. It is with an awareness of this concern the writer has attempted to discover what significance individual differences have in the instruction of students of the small rural high schools.

Mr. Hartenberger

Ralph Bohrson has estimated that ". . . 20 per cent of all public high school students in the country attend 'small' schools."[1] The assumption that small towns and rural education are dying out is not valid. The most recent population analyses suggest that the core of the big cities is the only segment losing population, that the suburbs are gaining in population and that nationally rural areas are stabilizing their populations.[2] Educators emphasizing individualization of instruction are concerned about the quality of curriculum offerings for the large percentage of school children living in rural farm communities.

MR. HARTENBERGER is Superintendent of Schools, Moccasin, Montana.

[1]RALPH G. BOHRSON, The Small School—*Its Strength and Limitations* (Reprinted from the Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals), 1963, Vol. 47, No. 282, p. 107.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 107.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

C 000 937

[Vol. 51, No. 3, December 1965]

Can the contemporary American "small" high school play a significant part in this national concern for improvement? Is the small high school able to be a good school? Bohrson has said, "The small school can be a good school if we apply the newest research-supported programs in organization, operation, curriculum revision, and methods, and if our purposes are sound."[3]

One advantage small schools have is the possibility of planning schedules around students' needs to provide the flexibility desired in all school systems. It is easier to plan schedules around 50 to 100 students than it is to plan schedules around 500 to 1000 students. It is also easier to effect curriculum, time and personnel changes in small schools. Individualization of instruction will help to provide an opportunity for individuals of various degrees of ability to realize their full potentiality and to perform at their highest level.

Another advantage is that the team approach can be used more easily in a small school, that is, the willingness and ability of a group to coordinate its efforts toward solving a problem is usually simpler to initiate and evaluate in a small school situation. Bohrson is quite certain that "The good teacher with the small class living close to individual students in the community has a built-in advantage for achieving excellence in the teacher-learning process."[4] The small school involving fewer numbers can attempt more compatible working relationships between administration, teachers and students in an effort to provide for the constantly changing needs of youngsters. This relationship of administrators, teachers and students becomes closer in many of the smaller schools because the administrators have to teach, also.

What are some factors that will influence a school's ability to individualize? This paper will comment on only five of the many factors that could be mentioned.

A. The Community. "Talk about school problems which ignores the framework of society or, by wishful thinking, replaces the real framework with an illusionary one is at best, frivolous; at worst, dangerous. The framework is in part legal, governmental, formal; in part, it is extralegal, determined by local traditions, customs, by economic and social considerations and, above all, by family attitudes."[5]

It is the duty of the local community, through authority granted by the state, to develop a school which, in its opinion, and within the prescribed limits of the law, best meets the needs of the individual community. Educators are aware of inconsistencies of purpose within the varied communities throughout the country. Overemphasis upon certain phases of the educational program is based upon the community attitudes concerning education.

The most important factor in determining the quality of a school program appears to be the level of expectation which the specific community holds. If this expectation is high, the community is usually willing to pay the higher costs created by individualized

---

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] JAMES B. CONANT, *The Child, the Parent, and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1959), p. 65.

[Vol. 51, No. 3, December 1965]

instruction. Instructional facilities and materials such as resource centers, well-equipped libraries, individual study areas, correspondence work, audio-visual materials and programed materials can add a substantial load to the tax burden of the community. There is not a clear answer to the problem of how a community can be persuaded to meet the additional financial obligations of an individualized program. Herbert W. Schooling has indicated that communities have broad limits within which choices can be made, and that a wise choice is the result of alternatives that are clearly defined with consequences fully understood.[6] Institutionalized goals such as the number of students accepted into college or the final standing of a basketball team should not dominate the individual growth of the child.

B. The Teacher. A major confrontation to be considered in this area is the development of teachers who can instruct their pupils in the basic skills of a traditional program and who will, at the same time, instill in them a dedication for excellence in personal development.

Most educators agree that individual differences are an essential ingredient in good teaching; yet, there appears to be little harmony among training institutions on how this trait should be taught.

It may be that the job of preparing teachers in the understanding of the implications of individualization is a matter for the specific schools intending to implement this type of program. The necessity of a strong program for individualization practices may not be within the realm of teacher-training institutions so long as teachers are asked to be specialists in academic areas.

C. The Classroom. Theory, preparation and materials are to little avail until they are placed in use by the instructor and student in the classroom. Though the ultimate goal of individualized instruction is every student working to the limits of his capabilities in an environment conducive to the fulfillment of learning, involving whatever materials and personnel are necessary to gain this control, it is difficult to approach this ideal without great effort by both the student and his leader, the teacher.

Instructional materials should be adapted to individual use. The development of a comprehensive resource center, conveniently located, is primary if full advantage is to be taken of individualization. Availability of the center whenever necessary to carry on the learning process becomes paramount for the program.

D. The School Plant. Plant, by its very nature of form following function, becomes so individualistic that it is difficult to discuss anything other than the philosophy without knowledge of the specific circumstances. Architect John Reid has said:

> Education as an individualistic, creative, thoughtful method of learning is a fluid activity. A fluid might be said to take the shape of its container. If this is true, I think we might also say that the container should change its shape when required.[7]

[6] HERBERT W. SCHOOLING. *Individualizing Instruction*. National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 314.

[7] JOHN REID. *The Things of Education* (New York: Educational Facilities Laboratory, Inc., 1961), p. 5.

[Vol. 51, No. 3, December 1965]

ROTATING SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Revised and Adopted at the Nov. 17, 1965 Teacher Meeting

Grade Level: 11

Student Name: Ned Ashcraft

Advisor (Major): Mr. Day

SCHEDULE FOR GRADES 7-12

Period Begins	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30	1 ART	8 FREE OR P.E.	7 BAND	3 PHYSICS	2 PHYSICS (LAB.)
9:25	2 FREE	1 ART	8 FREE OR P.E.	4 RUSSIAN	3 PHYSICS
10:20	3 PHYSICS	2 PHYSICS (LAB)	1 ART	5 GOV'T	4 RUSSIAN
11:15	4 RUSSIAN	3 PHYSICS	2 FREE	6 ENGLISH III	5 GOV'T
12:10	L	U	N	C	H
12:40		ACTIVITIES			
1:10	5 GOV'T	4 RUSSIAN		7 CHORUS	6 ENGLISH III
2:05	6 ENGLISH III	5 GOV'T		8 FREE OR P.E.	7 CHORUS
3:00	7 BAND	6 ENGLISH III		1 ART	8 FREE OR P.E.

Buses leave school at 4 p.m., except for Wednesday when they leave at 1:10 p.m.

Activities of Student:

1. BASKETBALL
2. STUDENT COUNCIL
3. PAPER STAFF
4. ANNUAL STAFF
5. CLASS OFFICER
6. BAND AND CHORUS

[Vol. 51, No. 3, December 1965]

E. Finance. One should not approach the problem of implementing individualization of instruction without a careful study of the implications of financing the proposed program. Research of the relationship of cost and quality, assuming like things are measured, tends to prove the truth of the old adage, "You get what you pay for." Studies of the cost-quality relationship, beginning in 1925 and ending in 1948, by Bagely, Thorndike, Clark and Bowyer are summarized by the following three statements:

> 1. Regardless of the method of measuring quality, a relatively strong relationship holds through all levels of expenditure as yet experienced in public education.
>
> 2. Even the highest expenditure public schools do not begin to approach the point, if there is one, where the relationship drops off.
>
> 3. The relationship appears to be an accelerating one. Those who spend more tend to add to the range of education on one hand, and on the other, to do a better job of focusing on the needs of children and young people throughout the range of ability.[1]

In an attempt to individualize the instructional program at Moccasin, the following innovations have been incorporated into the school program for the 1965-66 school year:

1. The use of a rotating schedule. (See sample schedule on page 41.) This is an 11th-grade student's weekly schedule which was developed through the cooperative efforts of the student's advisor and the student. The schedule is sufficiently flexible to make possible changes and modifications as the student's progress is evaluated.

2. Multiple classes. Algebra and general mathematics are offered as multiple classes as are several other combinations of subjects.

3. The amplified telephone. This is used by classroom teachers and for in-service visits by guest speakers. It is also used by a representative of the school annual publisher who, through scheduled conferences, assists students as problems arise, offering his assistance from whatever part of the state he is in. The amplified telephone is used in a great number of ways.

4. Learning center. The traditional library has been expanded to permit students to use tapes, films, filmstrips and other published material. Furniture arrangement and partitions are used to elicit maximum use of these facilities.

5. Advisor system. In conference with parents and students, an advisor will assist in developing a program for the student. These programs are assembled into a master schedule. The advisor acts in this role throughout the student's program and works with both parents and children. A major advantage is to give a student, with his parents, an opportunity to explore programs with the specialized assistance of a teacher.

6. Independent study. No study halls are used; each student studies independently during open periods of time. Students, with the assistance of teachers, are rapidly accepting the responsibilities

[1] PAUL R. MORT, WALTER C. KEUSSER, JOHN W. POLLEY, *Public School Finance* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 80-81.

[Vol. 51, No. 3, December 1965]

of independent study. This has developed into one of the most rewarding innovations that have been incorporated as part of the transition to the ultimate program of nongrading. Correspondence courses for enrichment are being used as well as programed materials as part of the independent study program.